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Futures studies of Iran-Saudi Arabia relations (2028 Perspective)

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Abstract

According to convergence theory, whose famous theorists are Raymond Aron and John Kenneth Galbraith, Great powers, despite their ideological differences, probably have similar behavior to each other regarding issues related to national security and maintaining interests. So, Iran and Saudi Arabia should be aware that being strong and cooperating is the only option for a bright future for these two countries and consequently the Middle East region. In this context, the author believes that everything that is happening in our region today is a background for the new order. From Brexit, widespread protests in Iran, and the coming to power of the Taliban in Afghanistan, and shadow of Saudi Arabia over Yemen, to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Azerbaijan's control over Karabakh, and the control of a significant amount of the Gaza Strip by the Zionist regime. And what is important in the meantime is Iran's appropriate action to

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stay out of this competition. At the individual level of analysis, both countries have the main decision maker in the form of (leader / king). In terms of the region, it should be stated that these two can have the greatest impact on the security of the region. At the global level, America's focus from the Persian Gulf to the Asia Pacific can provide space for the creation of a bloc led by these two in the region with global influence. Iran and Saudi Arabia must be aware that the new world order is happening and all countries will pursue their interests at this time, and in the meantime, any country that falls into the trap of "internal unrest and foreign war" will be the loser in the future.

As a future study if the purpose of the research is to identify and evaluate the causal relationships and influence between factors, the structural method is more suitable, but if the purpose of the research is to produce and evaluate several different scenarios for the future, the extension method is more suitable. In this research, we present a combination of these two. In fact in this research, we identified the main drivers using the MicMac software, then obtained different scenarios using the morphological matrix, and finally we presented our prescriptive analytics and outlined the ways to achieve it.

The integrated (interdisciplinary) method tells us that since no single method has been able to be sufficient or complete on its own, it is better to use all possible methods to reach more convincing results and possibly discover the truth. So it can be concluded that the combination of realism and constructivism will have a favorable and balanced result. Whose foundations can be seen in the theory of realist constructivism, this approach can use cause and effect analysis and structural analysis in international relations and thus be an analytical and critical approach. In fact, flexibility can help us a lot, as Samuel Barkin uses this example in his book: In the sociology of science, paradigms are a bit like castles. The scientists are the knights in this metaphor, and the assumptions are the lords that the knights / scientists are sworn to defend. The strength of a paradigm can be measured by the number of scientists willing to defend its ramparts. Scientists tend to stay true to their assumptions, so that model castles successfully defend their inhabitants, until those inhabitants die. In this metaphor, one is more concerned with defending one's (fortress / paradigm) and defeating others than with building a bridge between them. In other words, the paradigms are different from each other and in conflict with each other, and we seek to overcome this issue.

What can be obtained from the historical investigation as well as the observation of current issues is that the relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia have been influenced by various factors such as culture, religion, politics, economy

and regional interests since ancient times. In general, the following three cases can be considered as the main turning points between the two countries. 1. The series of Arab-Iranian wars in the 7th century AD and the influence of Islam in Iran following the established communications. 2. The establishment of the Safavid government in the 16th century and the declaration of Shiism as the official religion of the country. 3. The impact of pan-Arabism movements and the Iranian revolution in the 20th century. In general, by examining the historical and contemporary relations of the two countries, we reached a set of events, trends, variables and actors. And finally, by examining the impact of these things on each other, we reached the drivers by which we were able to extract scenarios and finally presented our prescribed scenario and the solutions to achieve it.

It should be noted that after the mutual influence of 54 components on each other, the overall result was as follows:

- America is the most prominent actor (influential variable) in this case.
- The nuclear deal is very important.
- The role of communication developments can be influential in the future.
- The role of the Iranian society as a defeated actor is weak in these conflicts.

Finally, we present the recommendation of this research in the form of a short story.

In 2028, Iran and Saudi Arabia reached an unprecedented level of cooperation and friendship. They solved the old problems and established a bloc like the European Union with a new approach by reducing dependence on oil. America also supported this process and canceled all sanctions in order not to lose its superior position over China. The resistance axis countries also achieved acceptable stability following the de-escalation of tensions, and the neighboring Arab countries improved their relations with Iran, and the Middle East region began its new path.

In the best case, the future of the two countries is stable competition and cooperation, and in the worst case, Iran will become weaker and more normal every day under Saudi Arabia, and finally, at the point of desperation, they will lead to a military conflict. In fact, what is considered desirable from the point of view of this prescriptive future research lies behind the issue that Iran and Saudi Arabia achieve convergence with each other, a convergence that both of them are at the peak of power, and finally we get the following results:

- The two strong twin countries of Iran and Saudi Arabia will create peace and sustainable development in the region if they converge.
- The roots of proxy wars and terrorist acts will dry up.
- The problem of Palestine and Israel will be solved.

- It is in the interest of Iran and Saudi Arabia to take full control of the Persian Gulf together so that not only the hands of the western countries are cut short, but also a vacuum is not created.
- Creating an economic bloc that creates balance and benefit in the relationship between East and West.

Key words: Futures Studies, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Realist constructivism, Morphological Matrix, .MicMac Software.